



The Feet - Your Foundation

Zola Budd, the wispy South African runner, is famous for her middle-distance running record – but even more famous for something else: running barefoot!

According to Steven Robbins, a Montreal internist, Zola's got it right. The surprising truth is that running injuries are actually more common in runners who wear shoes than in those who don't. Good news for Nia – but we Nia dancers already knew that!

Feet are an amazing part of human anatomy. They each have 26 bones and three arches: two longitudinal arches (from heel to toe) and a transverse arch (bridging from left to right). Together with your ankles, your feet are the foundation you walk on, the base that connects your whole body to the earth. Each foot has 7,000 nerve endings that communicate with

you through sensation, through the voices of *pleasure* and *pain*. When you receive a signal of pain, your feet are asking you to pay attention and adjust something. You may need better fitting shoes, or to change the way you move, such as leading with your heel and rolling all the way through your whole foot to your toes.

The design of the feet (The Body's Way) reminds us that feet are meant to move freely. The 19 muscles in each foot naturally maintain flexibility, agility, mobility, strength and stability through the very movement they create. Moving your feet as if they are hands – wiggling and spreading your toes, grabbing with your toes as if picking up pennies, yawning and stretching your whole foot – keeps your feet healthy and sensory-smart.

Do you know the personality of your feet?

Getting to know your feet is the first step toward creating a loving relationship with your body from the ground up! To get started, tune into your feet and then answer the questions below.

1. Are your feet happy?
2. Do you sense pleasure in your feet when you stand?
3. Do you sense pleasure in your feet when you walk, run and dance?
4. Do your feet support you in moving powerfully and gracefully?
5. What do you take care of your feet on a daily basis?

For more information

Ask your teacher for more information and other Nia handouts.

Get the Nia book, *The Nia Technique** (2004, Broadway Books).

Go to NiaNow.com to learn more and subscribe to the FREE monthly newsletter for Everybody!

*Rosas, Debbie, and Carlos Rosas. *The Nia Technique: the High-powered Energizing Workout That Gives You a New Body and a New Life*. New York: Broadway, 2004. Print.